

Year C
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Jer 1:4-5, 17-19; Ps 71; 1 Cor 12:31-13:13; Lk 4:21-30)

Last week we referred to our tasks in doing God's will on this earth. Today's readings tell about how one particular task—that of prophesying, which we are to share in to one extent or another— meets with opposition in this world. The emotional, vulnerable prophet Jeremiah—who, like Jesus, was called to celibacy, Jer 16:2— has to confront powerful political players in his day, a group—made up of priests and false prophets, Jer 26:7-15— which favored an alliance with Egypt in order to withstand the Babylonians. In this situation, Jeremiah will be accused of treason and imprisoned, Jer 38:1-6. But from his mother's womb Jeremiah had been called to perform just this task, and he should not be afraid of his opponents; however, Jeremiah does have his weak moments and even lapses, and must be called yet again, Jer 15:10-21.

Jesus, too, is not accepted in his hometown. In fact, many saw his ministry and rejection in terms of Jeremiah (Mt 16:14). The assembly quickly change from admiration to rage, as their egos are bruised. Jesus not only has trouble with his neighbors due to their lack of faith in someone so familiar (cf. Mk 6:1-6), but he really irks them when he cites two biblical examples of prophets helping non-Israelites. They want to kill Jesus, as they had wanted to do to Jeremiah (see Lk 13:31-35).

The Christian mindset, as described by Paul in the beautiful "hymn to love (*agápē*), is meekness and gentleness and looking at the positive, seeking to help. It requires great mental health and a firm, deeply-assimilated set of values, which results in great freedom to do as Christ would do rather than as our stressful, competitive, me-first "efficient" society dictates and propels. This Christian love is greater than all other achievements, and leads to (and often requires) giving up our "rights;" examples from 1 Cor: to a salary and a wife, 9:1-7, 12, 18; to eating meat for the sake of the other, 8:13; to legal rights, 6:1-8. This is really imitating Christ (1 Cor 11:1), who being rich became poor, 2 Cor 6:10; 8:9.